

REMARKS:

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10-14 and 16-20. Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 13, 14, 19 and 20 are amended herein and new claim 21 is added. No new matter is presented. Claims 3, 9 and 15 remain cancelled.

Thus, claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10-14 and 16-21 are pending and under consideration. The rejections are traversed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(e):

Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,938,725 (Hara).

In Hara, an address of a transmission destination for an electronic mail message is determined based on a global address of an e-mail message extracted based on a keyword. The retrieving unit of Hara retrieves an electronic mail message containing a keyword inputted by comparing contents of the stored electronic mail messages stored with the keyword (see, col. 6, lines 18-26). Then, mail addresses contained in the electronic mail messages retrieved are provided for selection using the selection apparatus (14)(see, col. 6, lines 30-41). Hara determines the destination candidates for an original e-mail to be sent based on selection of mail addresses from addresses matching stored e-mail messages containing the keyword.

In contrast, claim 20 recites, “determining whether a **reply destination** of the electronic mail is **part of a mailing list** having multiple destination addresses listed therein” and “selecting at least one destination address from the mailing list and transmitting a **reply in response to the electronic mail received** only to the at least one destination address” (emphasis added).

Hara does not teach or suggest, “determining whether a reply destination of the electronic mail is part of a mailing list” and “selecting at least one destination address from the mailing list and transmitting a reply in response to the electronic mail received”, as recited in claim 20.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10-14 and 16-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations of: Hara, U.S. Patent No. 5,878,230 (Weber) and U.S. Patent No. 6,671,718 (Meister).

According to Weber, a sender may specify addresses that will automatically appear should a recipient resend, forward, or reply to the message. When the sender has selected a "reply to" address, the system places the address specified by the sender as the primary address field and when the sender has not selected a "reply to" address, the recipient fills in a primary address for sending the e-mail (see, FIG. 6 and col. 6, lines 13-29).

Meister is directed to alerting a sending user when an e-mail message having a recipient address for an unintended recipient is to be sent after a send function has been initiated, where the system adds a fully resolved address if no alias is found (see, col. 5, lines 1-17).

As mentioned above, Hara is limited to determining destination candidates for an original e-mail to be sent based on selection of mail addresses from addresses matching stored e-mail messages containing the keyword (see, col. 6, lines 18-26).

The claimed system and method prevent unnecessary transmission of replies to e-mails by enabling selection from destination addresses that are part of a mailing list (i.e., modification of addresses in the mailing list for the reply).

Independent claim 1 recites that the claimed e-mail terminal device "automatically extracts at least one mail address of the mailing list contained in a text of the E-mail received when the reply destination mail address is the address of the mailing list." Claim 1 further recites that the device "displays the at least one extracted mail address as a candidate for a reply destination from which a specified reply destination is selected", where "the specified reply destination is used for transmitting a reply in response to the E-mail received."

Independent claim 2 recites, "a first extracting unit which automatically extracts a reply destination mail address from a mail header of an E-mail received" and "a second extracting unit which automatically extracts at least one mail address of the mailing list contained in a text of the E-mail received." Claim 2 further recites that the extracted mail addresses are displayed "as candidates for reply destinations from which a specified reply destination is selected" and "said specified reply destination [is] used for transmitting a reply in response to the E-mail received."

Similarly, claims 7, 8, 13 and 14 recite that "at least one mail address of the mailing list" is extracted and displayed as "a candidate for a reply destination from which a specified reply destination is selected", where "the specified reply destination is used for transmitting a reply in response to the E-mail received."

Independent claim 19 recites, "selectively broadcasting a reply in response to the electronic mail to e-mail terminal devices corresponding to one or more of the designated destination addresses of the mailing list using a single mail address responsive to a selection by a sender of the reply."

The cited references, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest, "transmitting a reply in response to the E-mail received" in accordance with "a specified reply destination" selected from addresses of a mailing list (see each of the independent claims).

It is submitted that the independent claims are patentable over the cited references.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from the independent claims are patentably distinguishable over the cited references. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, claim 10 recites, "judging based on a mail address book whether or not the reply destination mail address extracted from the mail header of the E-mail received is the address of the mailing list" (see also claim 16). The cited references, alone or in combination, do not teach or these features of claims 10 and 16.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

NEW CLAIM:

New claim 21 is added herein to recite, "determining whether a reply destination of an electronic mail is part of a first mailing list having multiple destination addresses listed therein" and "generating a second mailing list responsive to a selection of at least one destination address from the first mailing list and transmitting a reply to the electronic mail using the second mailing list."

The cited references, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest "determining whether a reply destination is part of a first mailing list having multiple destination addresses" and "generating a second mailing list responsive to a selection of at least one destination address from the first mailing list", as recited in new claim 21.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that new claim 21 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

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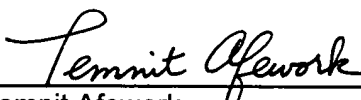
If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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